



State of Wisconsin  
**Department of Health and Family Services**

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For Immediate Release

## **High Risk Individuals Should Get Flu Shot by October 23<sup>rd</sup>**

(Madison – October 17, 2005)—The Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services is urging people with a high risk of complications from influenza to get their flu vaccine by October 23<sup>rd</sup>. This will help protect them during the expected typical influenza season that Wisconsin experiences each year.

“We understand people may be concerned about access to the influenza vaccine because of what happened last season. We currently expect that the influenza vaccine supply in Wisconsin will be adequate this year,” said Sheri Johnson, State Health Officer.

Wisconsin is participating in a tiered system of vaccine distribution developed by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It recommends vaccinating high risk individuals first and then offering the vaccine to the general public. Information regarding the tiered system has been distributed to local health departments and health care providers.

The Department is encouraging high risk individuals to be vaccinated before October 23, 2005. The vaccine can help prevent secondary health complications that might lead to hospitalization or death for people who are considered high risk. High risk individuals include:

- People 65 years old or older
- Children aged 6–23 months
- Pregnant women
- Residents of nursing homes or long-term care facilities
- Adults and children who have chronic respiratory, cardiovascular, metabolic, pulmonary or other autoimmune disorders

In addition, health-care professionals and people who care for children under 6 months old should also be vaccinated before October 23, 2005. This will help reduce the possibility of transmitting the virus to the people they care for.

To get your influenza vaccine, contact your health care provider, local public health department or tribal health clinic. Manufacturers ship vaccine doses directly to doctors and clinics. According to the CDC, doses have already been shipped to Wisconsin and will continue to be sent to health care providers until they have received their complete order.

(MORE)

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Influenza is a contagious, respiratory disease caused by a virus, but it is different from a cold. Influenza illness ranges from very mild to severe, and in some cases, can cause life-threatening complications. Influenza symptoms come quickly and include:

- Fever
- Headache
- Dry Cough
- Sore throat
- Nasal congestion
- Body aches and/or tiredness

One way to prevent getting the flu is to get an influenza vaccine. Other ways to protect yourself include:

- Clean your hands often – with soap and water, or with an alcohol-based, waterless hand sanitizer.
- Avoid being exposed to people who are sick with influenza-like symptoms.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue whenever you cough or sneeze – then throw the tissue away.
- If you have an infant, don't expose him or her unnecessarily to large crowds.
- Use your own drinking cups and straws.
- Frequently clean commonly touched surfaces (door knob, refrigerator handle, phone, water faucets) if someone in the house has a cold or flu.
- Do not smoke around children.

If you think you have the flu, stay home, get plenty of rest, drink plenty of liquids and avoid using alcohol and tobacco. Antibiotics don't work because the flu is a virus. If your symptoms persist, contact your doctor.

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